

House Committee on Finance

SB2827 SD1 RELATING TO THE TRAUMA SYSTEM SPECIAL FUND

Friday March 30, 2012 – 3:00 PM - Room 308

Testimony of Billie Jean Tang; PT, MPH

CHAIR – Fall Prevention Consortium

March 30, 2012

LATE TESTIMONY

To the Honorable:

Representative Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair; and **Representative Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair**

The Fall Prevention Consortium strongly supports SB2827 SD1, which is being heard March 30th at your 3:00 pm hearing. The measure establishes funding for injury prevention under the Trauma System Special Fund. Preventing injuries reduces the burden on the trauma system that is designed to treat those injuries.

Established in 2001, the Fall Prevention Consortium is an advocacy group composed of private, public, agency, and concerned professionals working together to educate as well as reduce the impact of falls on our citizens. Each year over 5,100 children between the ages of 1 to 14 are treated in emergency rooms due to falls. Our *kupuna* suffer even more with over 5,700 treated in ER's however many of them never return home.

Overall, injuries are a major public health concern here in Hawai'i. Injuries take the lives of more children and young adults ages 1-40 years than all other causes of death combined, including heart disease, stroke and cancer. Every 5 hours in Hawaii a senior is injured so severely in a fall that they must be hospitalized. The financial cost of injuries is staggering – in Hawaii, the average annual cost of medical services alone is nearly \$330 million.

Prevention programs are the proven and most cost-effective method to reduce injuries and their astounding burden on the health system, as well as the impact on the injured and their families.

A comprehensive Trauma System that includes prevention and rehabilitation in addition to acute care is critical to Hawaii in reducing injuries and improving the outcomes for those injured. The Department of Health has a strong program that must be maintained as part of a comprehensive Trauma System. In its 2005 review, the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma acknowledged Hawaii's injury prevention program for its accomplishments and important role in an integrated trauma system for Hawaii.

It is therefore, an appropriate use of Trauma System Special Funds and good public policy to ensure the reduction of death and disability to Hawaii's people through a comprehensive Trauma System that includes support for injury prevention as a critical core component.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Billie J. Tang, PT, MPH

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